



PRESS RELEASE

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Community Multimedia Center Opens in Hirat

HIRAT, AFGHANISTAN | AUGUST 31, 2011 — The first of a network of community multimedia centers officially opened in the city of Hirat on Sunday. The USAID-funded center will provide access to the internet and other digital media technology for the use of private citizens, civil-society organizations, social groups, and small businesses.

Equipped with ten computers and simple video and audio equipment, the Hirat Multimedia Center will provide internet access, professional assistance, and a range of short training courses for those who want to improve their media, public affairs, and networking skills.

The Women Activities and Social Services Association, a Hirat-based regional social organization, manages the new multimedia center.

Roqeya Ahmadi, a resident of Hirat, has already become a regular visitor to the center, coming for training in digital photography and videography. "Multimedia is the cornerstone of society, especially in Afghanistan," she said. "After three decades of war, it's an effective way to increase our people's knowledge and to expand their vision of what they can do with their lives."

The center will provide a full program of short courses to enable visitors to make the fullest possible use of the internet and digital media. These will range from very basic courses (Computers for Beginners, How to e-mail, How to Blog) to more advanced ones (Creating Your Own Website, Filming a Short Video, Editing a Short Video), or will focus on the information potential of the internet (Using the Internet to Find a University Course, Using the Computer to Learn English).

"Introducing multimedia centers like this one exposes people to information and access to the world," said Jeannette Vail, democracy and governance officer for USAID in Hirat.

In the coming weeks, three more centers will open in Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad, and Kandahar to create a community multimedia network across Afghanistan.

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